

Message Text

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13

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

OMB-01 /071 W

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R 101509Z MAY 76

FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7949

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 0626

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR JO, IS,

SUBJ: TALKS WITH MAYORS OF BETHLEHEM, BEIT SAHOUR AND BEIT JALA

1. SUMMARY. IN MAY 10 TALKS WITH RE-ELECTED
MAYOR OF BETHLEHEM AND NEWLY-ELECTED MAYORS OF
BEIT SAHOUR AND BEIT JALA, THEY STRESSED NEED FOR
DEVELOPMENT FINANCING, ACCEPTED PLO AS DESIGNATED VOICE
OF PALESTINAINS, AND STATED WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT ISRAELIS WITHIN
1967 BORDERS. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER INITIAL SETTLING IN, ACCCOMPANIED BY
POLOFF/HULL I BEGAN CALLS ON NEWLY-INSTALLED WEST BANK
MAYORS MAY 10 IN BETHLEHEM, BEIT SAHOUR AND BEIT JALA.
MAYOR FREIJ OF BETHLEHEM SAID ACCEPTANCE BY UN
OF PLO MEANT THAT IS WAS INTERNATIONAL SPOKESMAN
FOR PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. WHEN QUERIED ABOUT PALESTINE
NATIONAL COVENANT, HE SAID HE COULD NOT GO THAT FAR
SINCE ISRAELIS, AS WELL AS PALESTINIANS, HAD RIGHT
TO THEIR OWN STATE. LEBANON, HE SAID, SHOWED GOALD
OF DEMOCRATIC SECULAR STATE TO BE IMPRACTICAL IN
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MIDDLE EAST WHEN LARGE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES WERE

SUPPOSED TO CO-EXIST PEACEFULLY.

3. FREIJ BEMOANED EXODUS OF WEST BANKERS TO JORDAN AND GULF STATES AND SAID DEVELOPMENT FINANCING MUST BE FOUND. HUSSEIN, HE ALLEGED, NO LONGER HELPED BETHLEHEM. FREIJ PROPOSED OIL RICH ARAB STATES ESTABLISH FUND OF JD 1 HUNDRED MILLION FOR WEST BANK DEVELOPMENT.

4. NEWLY-ELECTED MAYOR ATRASH OF BEIT SAHOUR TOOK LINE SIMILAR TO FREIJ. HE IS FORMER EMPLOYEE OF ARAMCO AND INDICATED THAT HE WOULD SEEK ASSISTANCE DIRECTLY FROM GULF STATES FOR SPECIFIC LOCAL PROJECTS. WHEN INVESTED BY MILITARY GOVERNOR, HE HAD REQUESTED RELEASE OF ADMINISTRATIVELY DETAINED COUNCIL MEMBER RISHMAWI. GOVERNOR HAD SAID CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT WOULD BE DELIVERED IN PRISON BUT MADE NO COMMITMENT CONCERNING RELEASE.

5. NEWLY-ELECTED MAYOR OF BEIT JALA DAOUD HAD PREVIOUSLY SERVED ON CITY COUNCIL AND HAD SPENT FOUR YEARS PUTTING TOGETHER SLATE WHICH WON UNANIMOUSLY. HE TOO STRESSED NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AND INDICATED THAT HE WOULD APPEAL TO NATIVES OF BEIT JALA NOW RESIDING IN LATIN AMERICA. MAYOR POINTED TO NEW MUNICIPAL MARKET BEING BUILT WITH JD 60,000 LOAN FROM ARAB BAN IN AMMAN, AND NOTED THAT REPAYMENT OF PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST WOULD EFETIVELY ELIMINATE ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE FORM AMMAN FOR NEXT SEVERAL YEARS. DAOUD SAID HE HAD INITIATED CONTACTS WITH OTHER WEST BANK MAYORS TO DISCUSS COMMON PROBLEMS.

5. COMMENT. ALL THREE MUNICIPALITIES SIMILAR IN THAT THEY HAVE CHRISTIAN MAJORITIES AND ARE TRADITIONALLY CONSERVATIVE. FREIJ SURPRISED OBSERVERS BY BEING ONLY CONCERVATIVE INCUMBENT TO BE RE-ELECTED. NEW MAYOR OF BEIT SAHOUR FROM WELL-TO-DO CLAN AND HIS SLATE APPEARS LARGELY TO BE SUBSTITUTION OF YOUNGER, BETTER EDUCATED CITY COUNCIL FOR OLDER GENERATION. IN BEIT JALA, REVOLUTION WAS FROM WITHIN OLD CITY COUNCIL AND WHILE NEW MAYOR WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE MORE ACTIVE THAN HIS

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PREDECESSOR, ARAJ, O RADICAL DEPARTURE SHOULD BE EXPECTED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MAYOR, POLICIES, WEST BANK, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAY 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976JERUSA00626
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760180-1133
From: JERUSALEM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760573/aaaackhs.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAY 2004 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <15 SEP 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TALKS WITH MAYORS OF BETHLEHEM, BEIT SAHOUR AND BEIT JALA
TAGS: PFOR, JO, IS, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006